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ADDRESSED TO HIS GRACE THE
DUKE OF PORTLAND.
A
M E M O R I A L
CONCERNING THE
WOOLLEN MANUFACTORY,
AND THE
EXPORTATION
OF
WOOL, UNMANUFACTURED,
INTO
FOREIGN COUNTRIES.
TO WHICH IS ADDED
A P L A N
TO PREVENT SO DESTRUCTIVE A COMMERCE.

BY
PETER PETERSON.

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L O N D O N :

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MDCCLXXXIII.



TO HIS GRACE

DUKE OF PORTLAND,

FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY, &c.

MY LORD,

THERE never was a subject of national consequence that demanded the attention of the legislature more than that which I presume to lay before your Grace in the following pages ; and as every honest subject, who wishes well to his country, looks up to your Grace with the fullest confidence that your great abilities, and your patriotic virtues will, as far as our present unhappy situation may permit the possibility, retrieve
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the national honour, and ease the excessive
burden of the subject, so I trust I shall
be excused the presumption of endeavour-
ing to contribute my mite to so arduous
an undertaking, by addressing the following
pages to your Grace,

having the honour to be,

With the greatest respect,

My LORD DUKE,

Your Grace's most obedient,
humble servant,

PETER PETERSON.

London, Nov. 1783.



M E-

MEMORIAL, &c,

NATURE has scattered over the face of our globe an infinity of productions, co-ordinate with its various climates, many of which serve to cloath its different inhabitants, and to protect them from the inclemencies of the seasons: those of the torrid zone are cloathed in silks and muslins, those of the frigid are wrapped up in furs and skins; the more temperate climates are distinguished by their produce of wool, for the superior excellence of which, this island stands unrivalled: hence its commerce in that article manufactured, is more considerable than that of any other nation in Europe; notwithstanding which, it is much upon the decline,

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and the woollen manufactory of this kingdom is infinitely less flourishing than it was on the conclusion of the war in 1763 ; consequently the poor manufacturers become unemployed, in proportion as the demands for their different commodities decrease.

If we seek for the source of so truly alarming an evil, we shall find it in the sinister views and clandestine practices of many, who elevate themselves by subverting the trade of their own country, whilst at the same time they enrich the natural enemies to, and rivals of our commerce, with an article that our ancestors, with a jealous eye, beheld as the only staple commodity of the kingdom, and of infinitely more real advantage to it, than the mines of Mexico and Peru are to the Spaniards. And we may with as much reason affirm, that England is founded upon woolpacks, as its staple commodity, as the Dutch boast that Amsterdam is founded upon herring bones ; alluding to their very extensive herring fishery.

To encrease our commerce and to employ our poor, are confessedly two objects of the
 2 greatest

greatest national consequence: by enlarging our commerce, we get possession of the raw produce of other countries; the advantages arising from the manufacturing of these, are diffused all over the kingdom, even to the lowest of its inhabitants, supplying them with subsistence, and securing them from the dire effects of poverty and idleness. But of all the various labour in which industry may be employed, there is none more beneficial than that of the woollen manufactory. This seems to be to us nature's best gift; to demonstrate which, arguments are unnecessary: to be fully convinced, we need only observe the endeavours of our enemies to deprive us of it; this will convey to us the strongest proof of the ideas which they entertain of its utility to this country; our exertions ought therefore to be redoubled, and motion given to every spring that can operate towards establishing, if possible, an exclusive commerce in every branch of the woollen manufactory. But as very few persons, except manufacturers, are sufficiently informed of the state of this manufactory, to be sensible how exceedingly interesting it is to the welfare, or indeed to the existence of their country, as a

commercial nation, I shall lay before them a sketch of the vast number of important advantages which accrue to it by the employment which it gives to a multitude of women and children, who are employed in the different stages of preparing the wool for the loom, and of manufacturing it into cloth.

According to the general calculation, sixty-three persons are employed one week in manufacturing of one pack, or two hundred and forty pounds weight of short wool, in the following manner.

- 3 Men to sort, dry, mix, and make it fit for the stock-carder.
- 5 To scribble or stock-card it.
- 35 Women and girls to card and to spin it.
- 8 Men to weave it.
- 4 Men and boys to spool it, and wind quills.
- 8 Men and boys to scower, butle, mill, row, shear, rack, and press it.

These sixty-three persons earn in their different employments a very sufficient support; deprived of their occupations, they are reduced to penury and wretchedness.

We

We are informed from very good authority, that forty millions of pounds weight of Irish and English wool are annually imported into France, which must be an immense loss to this kingdom, by failure of customs for such goods as would otherwise be imported in exchange for our cloths; besides, the manufacturing such a quantity of wool, would not only give bread to an infinite multitude of poor the whole year round, but it would also be an immense advantage to the manufacturer, to the merchant, and to the kingdom in general.

We will next examine the number of people employed in working up a pack, or two hundred and forty pounds weight of wool into stuffs fit for the Portugal or Spanish trades. These stuffs are made of a longer and coarser sort of wool, than that which is employed in the making of cloth, and is produced in Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, and Kent. To make such a pack of long combing wool into fine stuffs, such as serges, sagathies, calimancoes, &c. would, upon a moderate computation, employ three hundred and two persons for one week, who will earn 43*l.* 10*s.* viz.

7 Combers

		£.	s.	d.
7	Combers	—	3	10 0
	Dying	— —	5	0 0
250	Spinners	—	18	0 0
20	Throwers and doublers,		5	0 0
25	Weavers and their atten-			
	dants	—	12	0 0
				<hr/>
				43 10 0
				<hr/>

But if a pack of two hundred and forty pounds weight be manufactured into superfine stuffs, double the number of hands would be employed in the spinning, and especially the weaving of it.

To make a pack of wool into stockings will employ the following number of persons, who will thereby earn 56*l.* 1*s.* viz.

		£.	s.	d.
10	Combers	—	5	5 0
	Dyer	— —	1	6 0
102	Spinners	—	15	0 0
12	Doublers and throwers,		4	10 0
60	Stocking weavers	—	30	0 0
				<hr/>
				56 1 0
				<hr/>

It

It is unnecessary to enter into a farther detail of this business; what has been already advanced is sufficient to give an idea of the multitude of persons who are employed in the different branches of the woollen manufactory; and consequently a diminution of it must deprive a number of the poor, who are depending on it, of their daily subsistence.

That the woollen manufactory of this country is much decreased, is a very melancholy truth, and that no means can be devised to eradicate the cause of it, is very alarming: were it a hidden, speculative cause, it would not be a matter so astonishing; but a business carried on in the face of the world, in despite of various acts of parliament; a business which tends to destroy the very foundation of this empire, surely is an object that exacts every possible exertion to suppress.

The enormous evil here complained of, is the exportation of unmanufactured wool to our inveterate rivals, which gives them an opportunity of working up two packs of their own wool with one of our growth; so
that,

that, in fact, the whole that the French manufacture depends on the quantity they can import from England ; and as labour is infinitely less expensive in France than in this country, the French have been enabled, by imitating of our stuffs, by making them of a lighter quality, and the practice of a thousand other arts, to undersell us at almost every foreign market, and in a great measure to deprive us of the Portugal, Spanish, Levant, and Turkey trades : the consequence of which is, not only a prodigious decrease of our commerce, but the ruin of many of our manufacturers, who are thereby deprived of the means of subsistence. The Turkey merchant exported a vast quantity of cloth of our manufacture ; in return for which he imported raw silk, grogram yarn, galls, cotton, &c. This opened another field for employment, and thousands of our industrious poor were supported by manufacturing the raw silk into various articles ; it was the same with respect to the grogram yarn, the galls were likewise useful to us in dying, as also many other drugs, whilst the manufacturing of the cotton gave bread to multitudes.

To

To enable the reader to form an idea of the number of people employed in the working up of raw materials, exchanged for our manufactured cloth, we will lay before him an account of the number of persons employed in manufacturing an hundred weight of raw silk, in the broad-weaving trade; as also in making ribbands, stockings, and silver spinning.

To work up one hundred weight of silk into pieces will employ for one week,

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|----|-----------|
| 70 | Throwers. |
| 6 | Dyers. |
| 85 | Winders. |
| 50 | Quillers. |
| 26 | Warpers. |
| 60 | Weavers. |

297 Persons.

The manufacturing one hundred weight of Italian silks into ribbands, will employ for one week,

70 Throwers.

50 Weavers.

6 Dyers.

50 Quill boys and attendants.

176 Persons.

The manufacturing of one hundred weight of silk into stockings will employ for one week,

75 Stocking frame knitters.

50 Winders.

28 Sizers.

26 Seamers.

6 Trimmers.

70 Throwers.

255 Persons.

It is hard labour for one person to wind two pounds of silk per week, so that fifty must be employed to wind one hundred weight in that space of time. The spinner and ten boys may spin into silver thread two pounds

pounds of silk; so that one hundred pounds weight will employ upwards of five hundred persons. Besides the ways of employing the industrious poor already enumerated, a vast number is employed in making buttons, and twist for button holes, &c. Such are the benefits accruing to the nation for an exchange of our manufactured woollen commodities for the raw materials of Turkey and the Straits.

Having thus stated the number of persons employed in working up one hundred pounds of raw silk, it will not be foreign to our purpose, to lay before the reader an average return of raw silks, imported for many successive years, some time ago, from Turkey, Italy, and the East Indies.

	<i>Bales.</i>
By the Turkey or Levant company,	
in weight 160 great pounds each	2500
From Italy — — —	1300
From India and other parts — — —	850
	4650

If then an hundred pounds of flk will employ in broad weaving, narrow weaving, stocking frame knitting, and silver spinning, upon a medium in each of these employments two hundred and thirty persons, who amount to nine hundred and twenty in a week, what a vast number must four thousand six hundred and fifty bales, of one hundred and sixty pounds employ all the year round; besides the hands employed in working up the grogram yarn imported, which annually amounted to eighteen hundred sacks, containing each, two hundred pounds nett weight.

Having laid before the reader the happy consequences of a flourishing state of our manufactory, by keeping the poor constantly employed, we will bestow our attention on the accursed cause of its decline. But before we enter on this subject, we shall, by transcribing a letter of Sir Walter Raleigh's to King James the First, shew, that the decline of the woollen manufactory is not of a recent date, notwithstanding which, notwithstanding the immense importance it is to the trade and commerce of this kingdom, and notwithstanding the ruin or the welfare of

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this

this nation depends on the decaying or the flourishing state of this manufacture, yet no means have been yet discovered to restore it to its pristine reputation, by re-establishing its superiority over every other woollen manufactory in Europe.

Sir Walter Raleigh's letter to King James the First.

" May it please your Majesty,

" There have been about fourscore thousand undressed and undyed cloths yearly transported. It is therefore evident, that the kingdom hath been yearly deprived of about 400,000*l*. within these fifty years, which is nearly twenty millions, that would have been gained by the labour of poor workmen in that time, with the merchants gains for bringing dying stuffs, and return of cloths dressed and dyed, with other benefits to the realm, besides exceedingly enlarging of traffick and encrease of ships and mariners.

" There would have been gained in that time about three millions, by encrease of customs upon commodities returned for cloths dyed

dyed and dressed, and for dying stuffs, which would have been more plentifully brought and used for the same.

“ There hath also been transported in that time yearly, by baize, northern and Devonshire kersies white, about 50,000 cloths, counting three kersies to a cloth; whereby hath been lost above five millions by those sorts of cloths in that time, which would have come to poor workmen for their labour, with the customs for dying stuffs, and the people's profit for bringing them in, with returns for other commodities and freight for shipping.

“ Baizes are transported white into Amsterdam, and there being dressed and dyed, are shipped into Spain, Portugal, and other kingdoms, where they are sold in the name of Flemish baize, setting their own town seal upon them, so that we lose the very name of our home-bred commodities, and other countries get the reputation and profit thereof. Lamentable it is that this land should be deprived of the many above-mentioned millions, and that our native commodities of cloth, ordained by God for the natural subjects,

jects, being so royal and rich itself, should be driven to so small advantage of reputation and profit to your Majesty and people, and so much intercepted by strangers, considering that God hath enabled and given your Majesty power to advance dressing, and dying, and transporting of all your cloths within a year or two; I speak it knowingly, to shew how it may be done laudably, lawfully, and profitably.

“ All the companies of your land transport their cloths dressed and dyed, to the good of your kingdom, except the merchant-adventurer, whereby the Turkey and East-land merchants, with other companies, do encrease your Majesty's customs, by bringing in and spending dying stuffs, and setting your people on work, by dressing before they transport them; and they might encrease far more custom to your Majesty, and make more profit to themselves and this realm, and set many thousands of poor people more on work for dressing and dying stuffs, were it not that the merchant-adventurers, while rough, and undressed, and undyed, convey them into the Low Countries, where they sell them to strangers,

gers, who afterwards dress, dry, and stretch them to such unreasonable lengths, contrary to our law, that they prevent and forestal our markets, and prevent the just prohibitions of our state and realm, by their agents and factors lying in divers places with our own cloths, to the great decay of this kingdom in general, and discredit of our cloths in particular.

“ If this account were truly known, it would be found, that they make not clear profit only, by cloth transported rough, undressed, and undyed, sixty thousand pounds a year, but it is most apparent, your Majesty in your customs, your merchants in their sales and prices, your subjects in their labours, for lack of not dressing and dying, your ships and mariners in not bringing in of dying stuffs, and spending of allum, is hindred yearly near a million of pounds; so that trade is driven, to the hindrance of your Majesty and people, by permitting your native commodities to pass rough, and undressed, and undyed, by the merchant-adventurer.”

It is possible that some of these enumerated grievances may actually exist, but the

prin-

principal cause of the present decline of our woollen manufactures originated in the clandestine exportation of our wool in the fleece, or in woollen yarn, to our natural rivals in commerce, the French ; nor are they content with the fleece alone, but they are also, by every means of encouragement, endeavouring to get from us our breed of sheep ; in this, perhaps, they have already but too well succeeded, and if effectual means are not put into immediate execution, to prevent this traffick entirely, we may bid adieu, a lasting adieu, to every branch of our woollen manufactory, and consequently to every other branch of commerce which is depending on it.

The disease is desperate, indeed, and no expence whatever should be spared by government, that can procure the means of administering to its cure : but if it baffles every attempt, let us make a virtue of necessity, and draw such advantages from our situation, as may in some measure counterbalance an injury, to which we are unhappily obliged to submit.

Permission to export any unmanufactured commodity, may have the appearance of militating against the principles of sound policy ; but if there be clandestine means of exporting that commodity, which are totally impossible to prevent ; in such circumstances it may be very proper to authorise the exportation of it, as the state may thereby receive some advantage. It is supposed that the article of wool is exactly in this predicament ; and as there is a glut of this commodity at present in our own markets, and as our growth exceeds the demand of our manufactories, there cannot, I apprehend, be any injury in permitting the sale of it to foreigners, under certain restrictions ; more especially, as the smuggling of it to them is carried on in a very extensive manner, in defiance of every kind of prohibition to prevent its being sent out of England.

Without a supply of English and Irish wool, the French cannot carry on many of their woollen manufactories, such as those for barragons, sagathies, camblets, stockings, and, in short, every other that requires long wool ; therefore they give the greatest encouragement

agement to our smugglers to supply them with it, and the quantity imported into France in this manner is truly astonishing. If it were possible to prevent the French from being supplied with this article by our smugglers, most certainly, let the expence thereby incurred be ever so great, it ought to be done: but experience proves the impracticability of it, where the water carriage is so very short, as it is from the Hampshire, Sussex, and Kentish coasts, to those of Picardy and of Normandy; therefore, as the smuggling of wool out of the kingdom cannot be prevented, if any advantage may be procured to the state by authorising the exportation of that article, it must certainly be good policy to grant such an authority.

The quantity of wool clandestinely conveyed from England and Ireland into France, I am credibly informed, amounts at least to forty millions of pounds weight annually; this wool is sold to the French manufacturer at about two shillings per pound; I have even known two shillings and six-pence per pound given for it. Suppose the original cost of a pound of wool, such as is sold to the French,

to be about one shilling per pound, an act of parliament, authorising the exportation of it, and imposing a duty thereon of six-pence per pound weight for every pound exported, it would produce *a million sterling per annum to the state*, leaving at the same time a considerable profit to the exporters, factors, &c. and it would be totally impossible for the French to prevent the operation of such an act, without destroying the principal part of their woollen manufactories, the existence of which depends on the wool which they receive from England and Ireland; for what they import from Holland is too inconsiderable in quantity to be of any material consequence, as well as that of their own growth in Flanders, which is besides of a very inferior quality, and can be employed only in manufacturing of the coarsest articles.

The wisdom of the legislature has been hitherto ineffectually employed to prevent the exportation of English sheep into France, for the laws have been continually counteracted by the encouragement given by the French government to those who would import them; and I can from my own knowledge
assert,

assert, that by an application to a person in *Boulogne Sur Mer*, he will procure from his correspondent in England, as much English wool, and as many English sheep, as may be required ; but it must be confessed, that the price of the sheep is something more than they could be sold for in Smithfield market. I have known wool, the produce of sheep imported into France from England, sold at two shillings and six-pence per pound weight ; and I know that such sheep thrive, and produce in every respect, and are as healthy on some of the rich lands of Picardy and Normandy, as they are in general on Romney marsh.

Notwithstanding what has been said of the certainty of an addition to the revenue of *one million sterling per annum*, which will arise from authorising the exportation of wool, yet this is but a very inconsiderable object, when put in competition with the impossibility of smuggling wool unmanufactured out of the kingdom ; as the best means of preventing which, the annexed plan is most humbly submitted to the consideration of the legislature.

But

But I cannot take leave of the important subjects which have occupied the preceding pages, without saying a few words on the poor distressed manufacturers. Although there are laws to prevent their leaving the kingdom, and engaging in the manufactories of foreign countries, yet the severity of other laws, and the natural desire that every man has of preserving his liberty, supercedes the dearest considerations; and to avoid the operation of these laws, which would confine him for a trifling debt in a prison for the rest of his life, he steals himself from his country, and carries with him his trade, where meeting with encouragement, he enriches our rivals with his knowledge, and enables them to establish manufactories of the greatest injury to the commerce of this kingdom. In this manner most of the considerable manufactories in France had their origin. There is scarcely a loom in the cotton and woollen branch, but what was established, or is at present worked by the descendant of, if not actually a British subject. The manufactory of leather, and that of vitriol, recently established, originated nearly in the same manner: and from the same cause their ships are
manned

manned with British sailors, whilst our carpenters and shipwrights are employed in their dock yards. These people, though compelled to emigrate, in order to preserve their personal liberty, are looking with a languishing eye towards their native country, in the full expectation, that a law favourable to their hopes will permit them to return, and to possess the free enjoyment of their personal liberty. There cannot be any subject more interesting to the welfare of this nation, nor more worthy the attention of the legislature, than a thorough investigation of this matter, inviting the multitude of British subjects, whom misfortunes have driven from their native country to return to it, and devising the means of preventing future emigrations.

P L A N

P L A N

*To prevent the clandestine Exportation of Wool
to France, from England, or from Ireland.*

THE laws already enacted for regulating the transporting of wool by land carriage, and also yarn made of wool, to remain in full force.

A greater number of troops should be quartered on the coast, as well to assist the officers of the revenue in making seizures, as to render the embarking of wool, or of sheep, the more hazardous and difficult. In all suspected places there should be a constant patrol; soldiers on this duty should have double pay; the dividend of seizures to be made in the same manner as at present.

A number of cutters of sufficient burthen, and well manned, must be stationed on the coast at the places hereafter mentioned. These, it is presumed, will not only put an entire stop to the exportation of wool, but they will also
be

a very considerable check upon every other kind of contraband commerce. The complement of men to man the above cutters, need not be all able seamen, a serjeant and party of marines would be very proper for this service; as to the superior officers, it is conjectured, that many lieutenants of the navy would not conceive themselves disgraced by assisting their country in this line of service.

The inn-keepers on the coast might think themselves aggrieved, by being over burdened with soldiers, or having a greater proportion quartered on them than are quartered on their brother publicans: but if some regulations were to be made respecting the quartering of soldiers in general, so many inn-keepers would not be such great sufferers as they generally are, when it is their lot to be under the necessity of giving quarters to a number of the cavalry.

There are many parts of the kingdom where soldiers are scarcely ever seen; if a general tax of ten per cent. on the rent of the house, were to be laid on every inn-keeper, of every denomination, it would produce

duce a considerable fund, which might be the means of making the weight of giving quarters to the troops fall equally on all, for those who did not give quarters to the troops would pay a proportion to those who did. This hint being foreign to my subject, I shall say no more on it at present, than that there are in the kingdom of England 52,592 public houses, which would certainly raise as many pounds. Supposing the army in England to be twenty-five thousand, twenty thousand infantry and five thousand cavalry, every landlord might out of that fund receive a penny a day for every foot soldier, and two-pence for every dragoon and his horse, and there would be a surplus then remaining.

But to return to our subject. Forty cutters stationed in the following manner, it is presumed, would put an effectual stop to the contraband commerce of wool.

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 Off Dover. | 1 Off Brixham. |
| 1 Off Beachy-Head. | 1 Off Stone. |
| 1 Off Rye. | 1 Off Newhaven. |
| 1 Off Folkestone. | 1 Off Chichester. |
| 1 Off Hastings. | 1 Off Heyling island. |
| | 1 Off |

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1 Off the Needles. | 1 Off Cape Cornwall. |
| 1 Off the Isle of | 1 Off Hearty Point. |
| Wight. | 1 Off Saint David's- |
| 1 Off Weymouth. | Head. |
| 1 Off Portland. | 1 Off Worm-Head. |
| 1 Off the Ram Head. | 1 Off Scilly. |
| 1 Off the Lizard. | |

Northern Station from the Thames.

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| 1 Off the isle of | 1 Off Tinmouth Bar. |
| Sheppy. | 1 Off Mary Port. |
| 1 Off Harwich. | 1 Off Frith of Forth. |
| 1 Off Yarmouth. | 1 Off Frith of Mur- |
| 1 Off Lynn. | ray. |
| 1 Off Scarborough. | 1 Off Isle of Orknies. |

For the Coast of Ireland.

- 2 Cutters from the salt houses to Cape Clear.
- 2 From Cape Clear to the Shannon.
- 2 From the Shannon to the isle of Arran.
- 2 From the isle of Arran to Groom island.
- 2 From Groom island to the Salterns.

The objections which, perhaps, will be made to the above number of cutters, may be the expence: but I here repeat, that if

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they

they produce the desired effect, it cannot be purchased too dearly; besides, I will suppose a tax to be laid of one farthing a pound on all fleece wool, and half that duty on all wool taken from sheep's skins or lamb's skins, commonly called fell wool, to be applied towards defraying the expence of these cutters. The grower of wool may think this a hardship; but there is great reason to believe, that what he pays will be inconsiderable, compared with the advantages which he will receive from the advanced price of wool, and the greater consumption of corn, cheese, and cattle; for it is very rational to suppose, that many thousands of poor people, who now live on parish rates, drink water, and eat little more than bread, would, if constantly employed, and paid for their labour, live infinitely better than they possibly can at present. This would be much more to the farmer's advantage than the money he pays to procure it; and the landed interest would also be benefited thereby, because there would be a greater demand for wool at home.



THE END.

